

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Edwards for the courtesies extended to Applicants' counsel Mr. Timmons during a personnel interview on November 16, 2005.

Claims 1, 3-18, 22, 24, 25, 27, and 28 remain in this application. Claims 19-21 have been canceled without prejudice as being directed to non-elected subject matter.

Claims 11-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, because in claim 11, lines 2-3, the phrases "said strip brushes" and "the other strip brush" lack antecedent basis. In response to this rejection, claim 11 has been amended to change its dependency from claim 9 to claim 10. It will be seen that these phrases now have proper antecedent basis.

Independent claims 1, 22, and 25, and their respective dependent claims, all stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Davis (US 4,980,815) and Howell et al (US 2,660,791). For the reasons which follow, it is respectfully submitted that these rejections should be reconsidered and removed, particularly in view of the amendments made to claims 1, 22, and 25 by way of the instant amendment. Amended claims 1, 22, and 25 herein are identical in form to the claims discussed with Examiner Edwards during the interview of November 16, 2005 (except that the word "the" has been inserted in the last line of claim 25 immediately before "strip brush" to correct a clerical error.)

Davis '815 discloses the conventional approach in bowling lane conditioning machines of transferring lane dressing to applicator roll 134 using a rotating metal roller (transfer roller 130). However, it has been found that transfer rollers of this type can sometimes deliver their load of dressing too quickly to the applicator roll and thus cause inconsistencies in the pattern of the conditioning dressing applied to the lanes, and departures from the intended pattern. Davis 6,383,290 (not cited) discloses one effort to improve upon those shortcomings. In Davis '290 a smoothing assembly 20 has pads 62 that engage the transfer roller 16 immediately after dressing is received from distribution head 18 in an effort to more uniformly distribute the dressing around the transfer roller before the dressing is transferred to applicator roll 14. However, even smoothing pads do not provide fully satisfactory results.

The present invention is directed to the discovery that replacing the conventional rotating metal transfer roller with a non-rotating transfer brush yields significantly improved results. It not only provides more predictable “loads” of dressing on the applicator roll (and the lane), but also reduces maintenance problems and prolongs the useful life of the applicator rolls.

These beneficial results are not even remotely suggested by the references of record. While Howell et al. discloses in Fig. 7 a brush 89 engaging a roller 70a, this reference relates to a pavement marker wherein chalk or paint is applied to the surface of a road to leave a crude mark or paint line for subsequent cutting of the pavement and/or digging operations. One skilled in the art of bowling lane maintenance machines would certainly not turn to crude pavement marking devices for help in solving problems with the quality and precision of dressing patterns laid down by his bowling lane maintenance machine, where the dressing pattern on the lane has a tremendous influence on the behavior of a bowling ball as it spins and rolls down the lane. This reference completely lacks any suggestion of the improved dressing pattern quality that is obtainable when the transfer roller in a bowling lane maintenance machine is replaced with a transfer brush as claimed in the present application. Thus, there is no suggestion for one skilled in the art to combine the teachings of Davis '815 and Howell et al., and it is not reasonable to hold that the transfer roller of Davis '815 could obviously be replaced with the brush of Howell et al.

In addition, it is to be noted that claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of canceled claim 2, specifying that the applicator roll has “a plurality of generally radially outwardly projecting bristles” and that the brush assembly has bristles “that are disposed in interengagement with the bristles of the applicator roll.” In contrast, the Howell et al. pavement roller 70a has no bristles at all. It appears to be a typical smooth-surfaced paint roll, perhaps of felt or the like. Thus, Howell et al. fails to teach, predict or even suggest what happens when the bristles of a bristle-type applicator roll are “interengaged” by the bristles of a dressing transfer brush as in the claimed invention. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 1 and that the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Further, since claims 3-18 depend from allowable claim 1 and set forth further details of the invention not shown or suggested by the prior art, it is respectfully submitted that claims 3-18 are in full condition for allowance as well.

Independent claim 25 is a method claim that is similar in many respects to “apparatus” claim 1. As explained above with respect to claim 1, there is simply no motivation or suggestion for one skilled in the bowling lane maintenance art to combine the teachings of Howell et. with Davis '815 to arrive at the lane maintenance method of claim 25. This is particularly true in light of the amendments made to claim 25 wherein the subject matter of canceled claim 26 has been incorporated into claim 25 so that claim 25 now calls for the dressing to be transferred “to a rotary applicator roll having bristles disposed in engagement with the lane and with the bristles of the strip brush for obtaining dressing from the strip brush and applying it to the lane.” If the teachings of Howell et al. were combined with Davis '815, the bristle applicator roll of Davis '815 would be replaced by the smooth paint roller of Howell et al., which would render Davis '815 unsuitable for its intended purpose of laying down a precise dressing pattern on a bowling lane, as noted above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 25 and that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Further, since dependent claims 27 and 28 depend directly from allowable claim 25 and set forth further details of the invention not shown or suggested by the art of record, it is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable as well.

Independent claim 22 is an “apparatus” claim directed to the relationship between the moving dressing dispensing head 18 and the transfer brush 46. Among other things, claim 22 calls for the strip brush to have a set of downwardly projecting, “inclined bristles” and for the dispensing head to “discharge lane dressing onto the upper side of the bristles of the strip brush as the dispenser moves along its path of travel.”

On the other hand, the bristles in Howell et al. are vertically disposed and have their upper ends inserted into the outlet port of the paint container 88. Thus, even if the teachings of Davis '815

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and Howell et al. were combined in the manner suggested by the Office Action, the resulting combination would still fail to meet the requirements of claim 22.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the Office Action fails to set forth a *prima facie* case of obviousness with respect to claim 22 and that the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) should be reconsidered and withdrawn. Further, since claim 24 depends from claim 22 and sets forth further details of the invention not shown or suggested by the art of record, it is respectfully submitted that claim 24 is also allowable.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that all remaining claims in this application are in full condition for allowance. Formal notice of such allowance is respectfully requested. Any additional fee which might be due in connection with this application should be applied against our Deposit Account No. 19-0522.

Respectfully submitted,

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